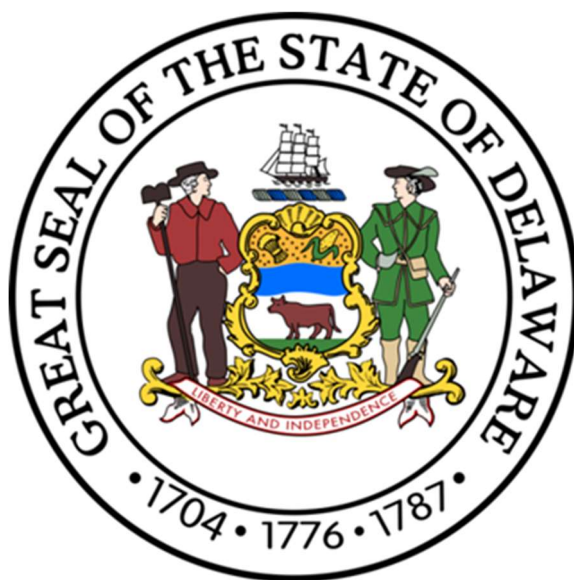


Delaware Shootings 2020

An Analysis of Incidents, Suspects, and Victims



December 2021

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Criminal Justice Council
Statistical Analysis Center
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Executive Summary

Delaware Shootings 2020: An Analysis of Incidents, Suspects, and Victims

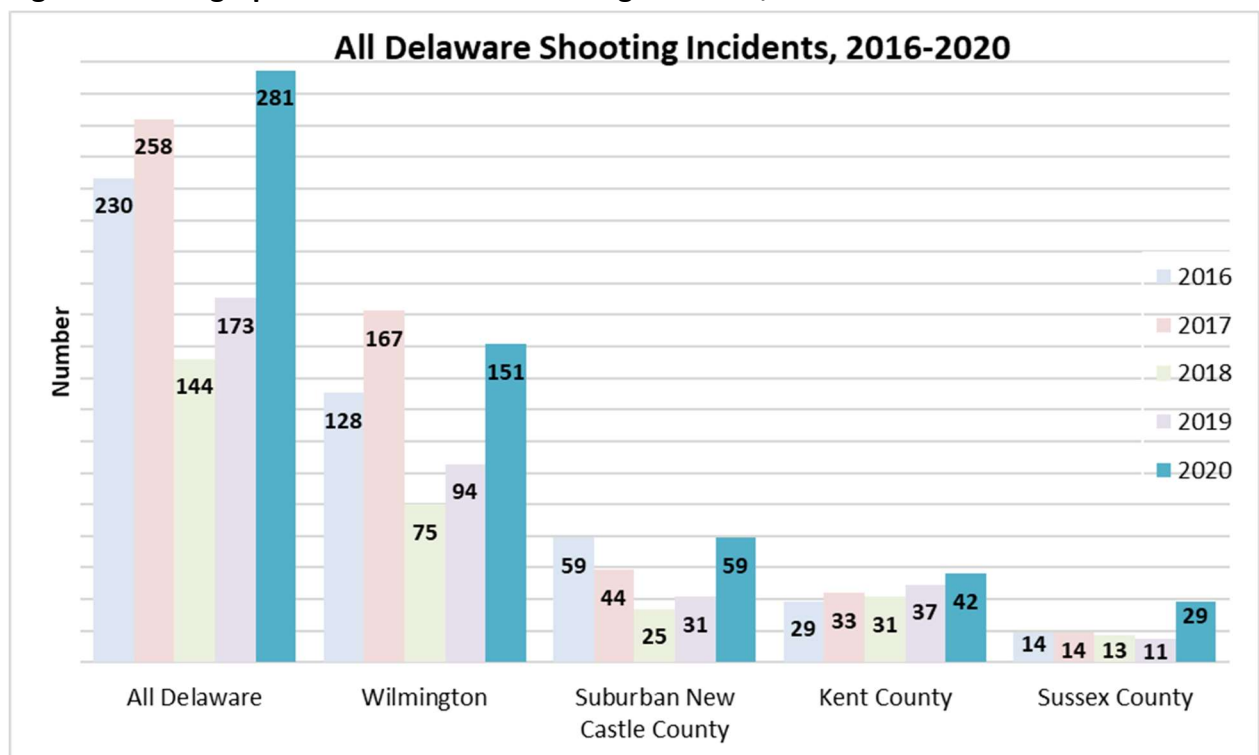
This report, covering 2020, is the tenth in the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center's statewide shooting incident analysis effort.

Methodology: To identify incidents for inclusion in the analysis, the Center uses a variety of methods, including monitoring media reports and police websites and exploring criminal incident data within Delaware's Criminal Justice Information System. These methods are described in the Methodology section of the report.

Key Findings:

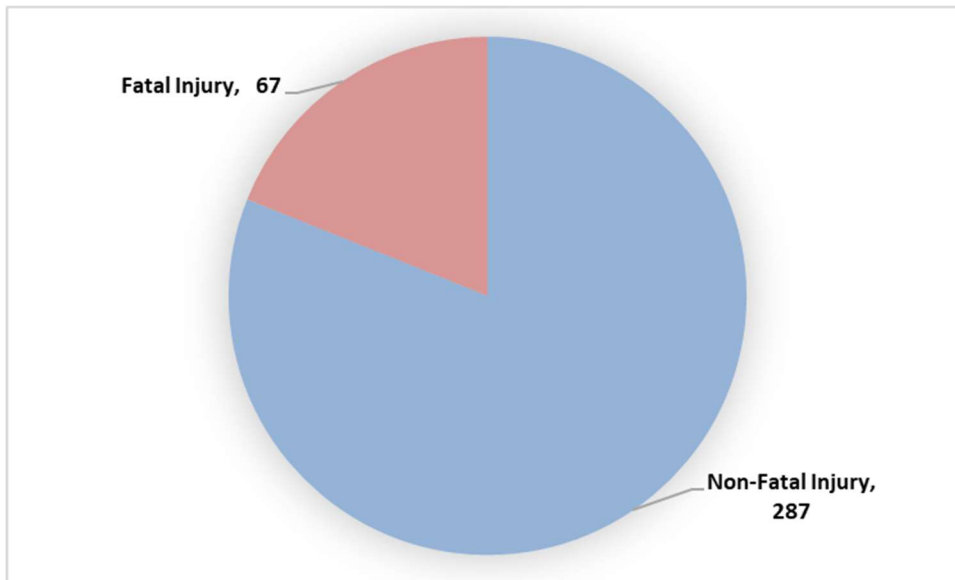
- After reaching a record low for the entire series in 2018, the number of shooting incidents in 2020 set a record high in the state as a whole. Sussex County set a series record as well, while suburban New Castle County tied its record. The remaining geographic areas also increased over 2019 (Figure E-1). Table A-3 and Figure A-1 in the Data Appendix provides all ten years of data.

Figure E-1: Geographic Distribution of Shooting Incidents, 2016-2020



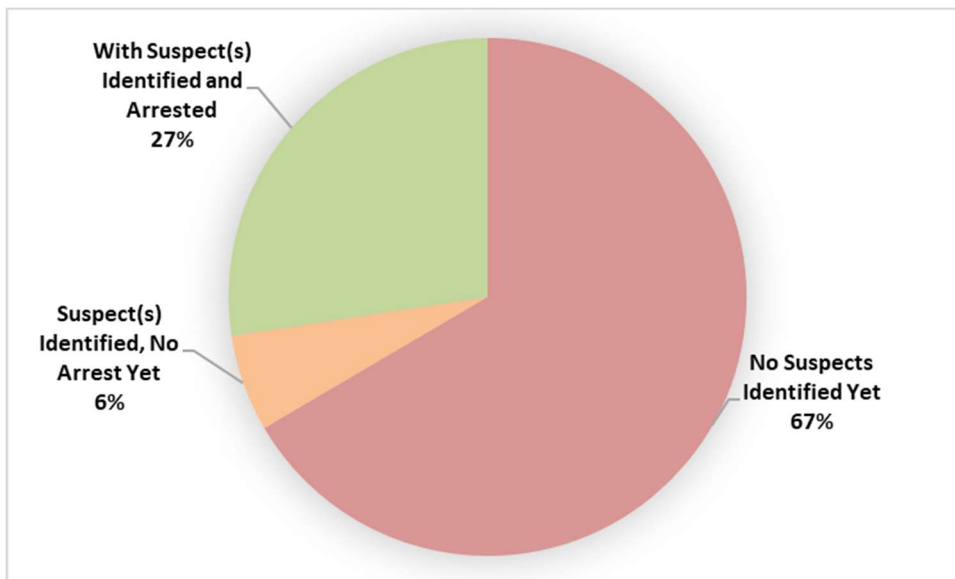
- Overall, 287 victims suffered non-fatal injuries, and 67 were killed in 61 fatal incidents (a record high for fatal incidents).

Figure E-2: Most 2020 Victims Suffered Non-Fatal Injuries



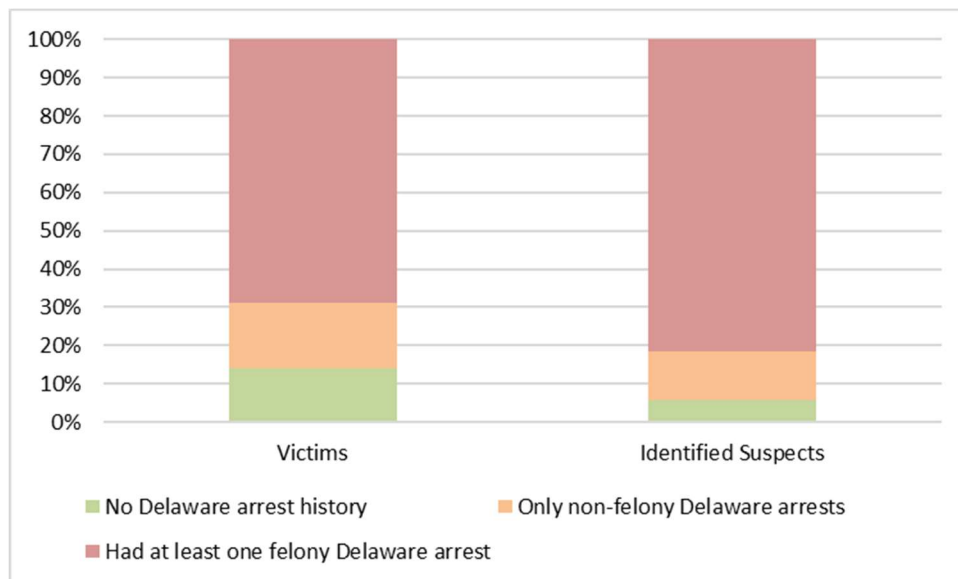
- Statewide, at least one suspect was identified in 34% of incidents overall, and arrests made in 82% of incidents with an identified suspect.

Figure E-3: Incidents with Suspects Identified and Arrested, Identified Only, and Not Identified



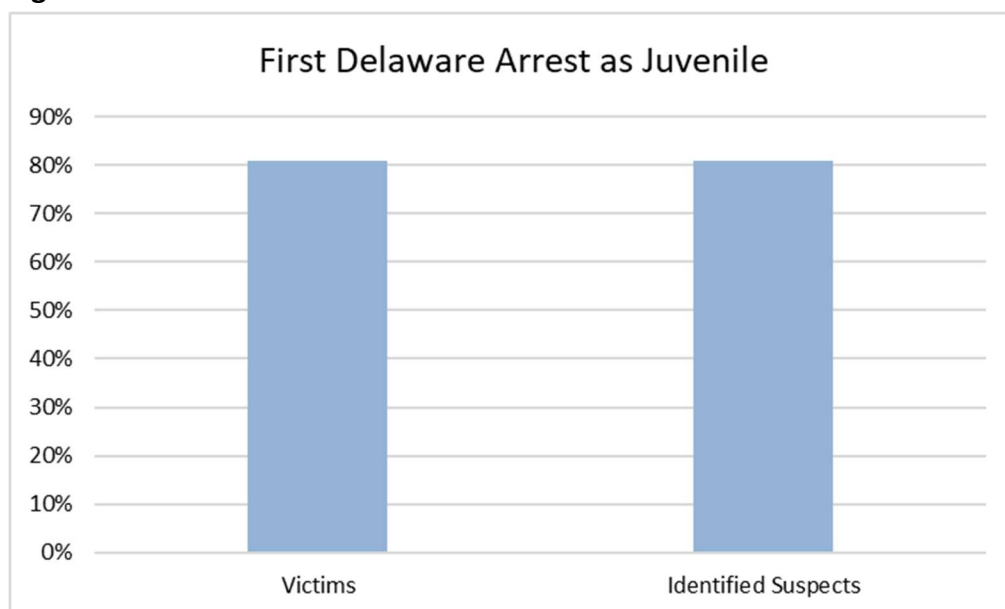
- Most victims and most identified suspects had a Delaware criminal history prior to the shooting incident in which they were involved.

Figure E-4: Most Victims and Identified Suspects Had at Least One Delaware Felony Arrest



- For identified suspects and victims with a Delaware arrest history, most were first arrested as juveniles.

Figure E-5: Most Delaware First Arrests Occurred as Juveniles.



An Analysis of Delaware Shootings in 2020

The following report is the tenth in a series examining criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person. This report examines multiple characteristics of shooting incidents, victims injured as a result, and suspects involved, along with an examination of victim and witness cooperation with subsequent shooting investigations. This iteration of the report continues the additional examination of suspect and arrest data from the previous report. It also includes a discussion of insights gained from the entire report series.

For further information and background, see the Technical Appendix.

Shooting Analysis Brief Methodology

The Statistical Analysis Center (referred to hereafter as “the Center”) actively monitors media and law enforcement agency websites throughout the year to flag potential shooting incidents as they are publicly announced. An extensive examination of data within Delaware’s Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) is also undertaken to identify additional potential incidents. All of these data are then examined to identify incidents where a criminal, non-accidental discharge of a firearm resulted in the death or injury of one or more victims (whether the person struck was an intended target or a bystander). Once the final set of qualifying incidents is identified, the additional data needed for this report are downloaded and analyzed.

Maps of shooting incidents for the state, each county, and the cities of Wilmington and Dover were also created. Please see *Shooting Incidents in Delaware: Mapping Supplement for the 2019 and 2020 Statewide Reports*, located on the SAC’s website (<https://sac.delaware.gov/crime/>), for further detail and the methodology used to create them.

The methodology is fully described in the Technical Appendix.

Considerations and Limitations

Criminal investigation of shooting incidents, as is typical for many violent crimes, can be complex. As a result, the data generated can be equally complex leading to challenges in analyzing those data. To account for simple data entry errors and information which can change as an investigation proceeds, the Center employs various quality control measures to ensure the final data set is as complete as possible. However, it remains possible that shooting incidents are undercounted in this report, although likely to only a very minor degree.

Based on the Center's experience over the course of this report series, caution should be used when comparing 2020 incident data to previous years. The COVID-19 pandemic led to subsequent State of Emergency declarations, court closings, and travel restrictions within the State of Delaware, among myriad other impacts. However, exploring the statistical contribution of pandemic effects is beyond the scope of this report.

A more complete discussion of considerations and limitations is included in the Technical Appendix.

Note that this report does not address accidental shooting incidents (of oneself or another, excluding incidents in which a bystander was struck), intentional self-inflicted shooting incidents, or shooting incidents determined by law enforcement investigation to be justified (e.g., self-defense).

Shooting Incidents, Victims, and Suspects

Incidents and Victims: This study identified 281 shooting incidents reported to Delaware's police agencies in 2020, up from the record low for this report series of 144 in 2018, and a record high for the series. These incidents resulted in the injury of 287 victims and the death of an additional 67 individuals (354 total victims). Twenty incidents were related to an intimate partner relationship, leading to the death of six victims during six of those incidents. The total numbers of incidents and victims, broken out by geography and fatal versus non-fatal incidents, are shown in Table 1. These totals reflect only criminal, non-accidental shootings of another person. Table A-3 and Figure A-1 in the Data Appendix presents data for the entire series by geographic area.

Overall, 75% of 2020 incidents occurred in New Castle County, resulting in 76% of the overall victim total. The City of Wilmington accounted for 54% of all 2020 shooting incidents and more than half of all victims, while suburban New Castle County accounted for 21% of incidents (with the number of incidents tying the series high for that area) and 23% of victims. Kent County accounted for 15% of incidents and a similar proportion of victims. Sussex County also set a record for this report series (29) and experienced more than 10% of incidents (twice the 2019 rate) with a similar proportion of victims.

Statewide, just over one out of every five incidents resulted in a fatal injury to a victim. Incident fatality percentages generally ranged from 17% in Wilmington to 31% in Kent County.

Almost 70% of the 61 fatal incidents (which set a statewide record for the series) occurred in New Castle County, with 21% in Kent County and 10% in Sussex County. Wilmington accounted for 43% of all fatal incidents in 2020. Fatality-related proportions can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Incidents and Victims by County

	Incidents				Victims			
	Count				Count			
	Total	Non-Fatal	Fatal	Percent Fatal	Total	Injured	Killed	Percent Killed
Delaware	281	220	61	21.7	354	287	67	18.9
New Castle County	210	168	42	20.0	268	220	48	17.9
<i>Wilmington</i>	151	125	26	17.2	186	157	29	15.6
<i>Suburban NCC</i>	59	43	16	27.1	82	63	19	23.2
Kent County	42	29	13	31.0	50	37	13	26.0
Sussex County	29	23	6	20.7	36	30	6	16.7

Incident and victim counts by police agency can be found in Tables A-1 and A-2 in the Data Appendix. Figures 1 and 2 provide more information about the locations of the 2020 shooting incidents (with 2016 through 2019 location data provided for comparison).

Figure 1: Distribution of 2016-2020 Shooting Incidents (All Incidents)

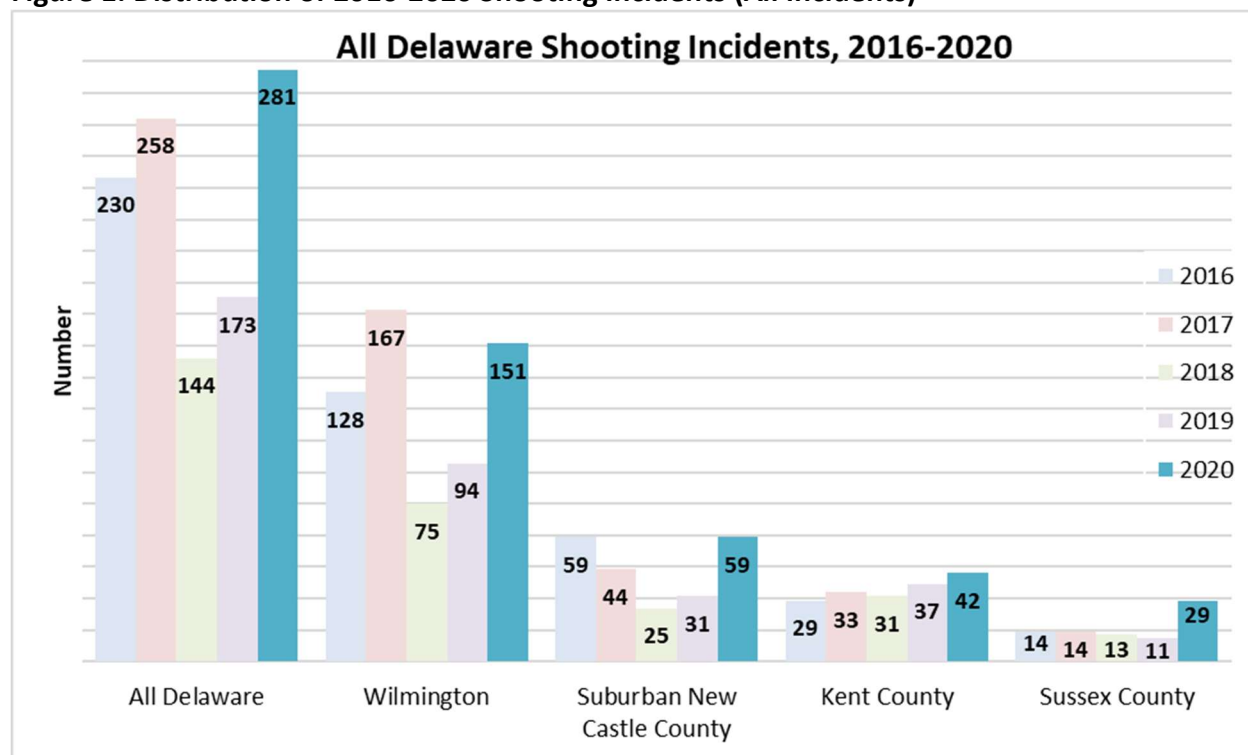
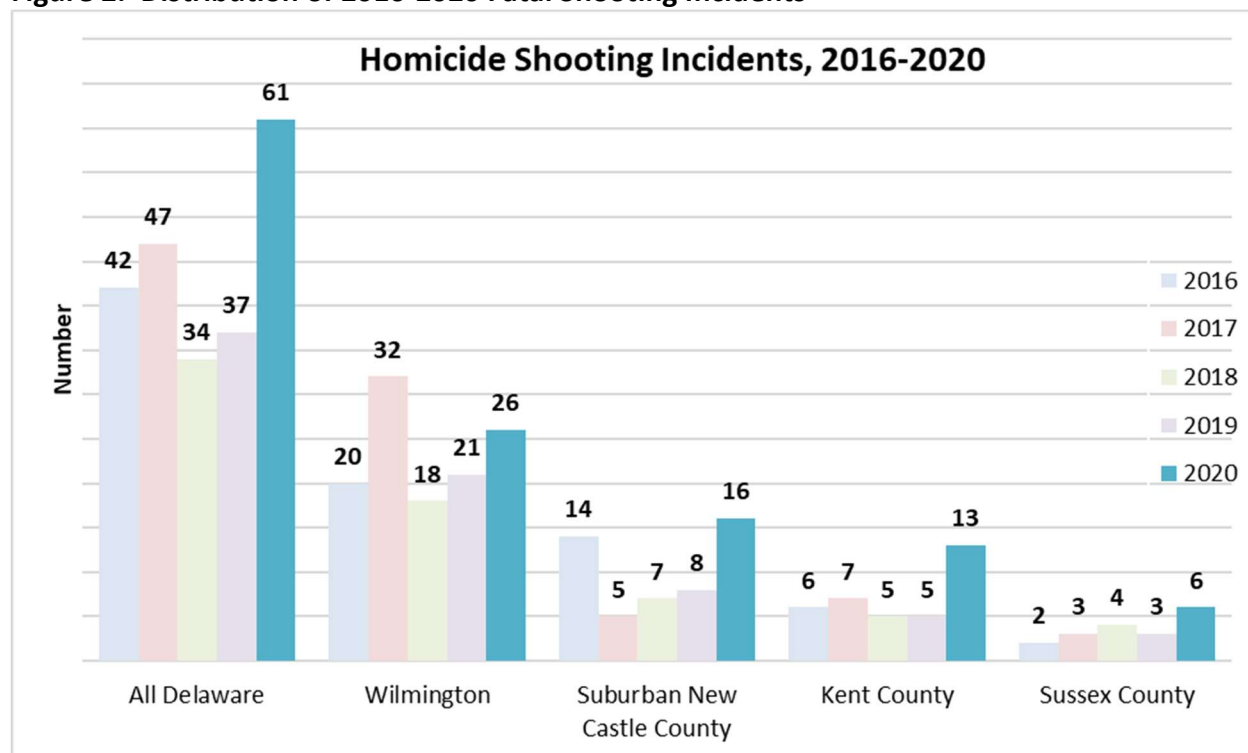


Figure 2: Distribution of 2016-2020 Fatal Shooting Incidents



Note: Further geographic information regarding fatal and non-fatal shooting incidents in this report may be found in Shooting Incidents in Delaware: Mapping Supplement *for the 2019 and 2020 Statewide Reports*, located on the SAC's website (<https://sac.delaware.gov/crime/>). This supplement contains maps for the entire state (pages 3-4), each county (pages 5-10), and the cities of Wilmington (pages 11-12) and Dover (pages 13-14).

Suspects and Arrests: A review of police complaint records shows that at least 444 suspects were thought to be involved in the 281 incidents shown in Table 1. As of June 17, 2021, 34% of incidents statewide had at least one suspect identified by name (see Table 2 on the next page). The percentages for non-fatal incidents were lower and fatal incidents higher compared to the overall percentage.

In New Castle County, just under one-fourth of all Wilmington incidents and just over one-third of incidents in the suburban portion of the county had at least one identified suspect. Just over half of Kent and Sussex County incidents had an identified suspect. The percentages for non-fatal incidents for each of the areas above were generally lower than their overall percentages, while the percentages for fatal incidents were generally higher (with Sussex County the lone exception to both patterns).

Note to the Reader About Suspect Counts

The *actual* number of suspects involved in the shooting incidents cannot be determined as of the report date. A number of factors affect the suspect numbers derived from CJIS, including:

- The number of suspects in an incident may not be known or revealed to police.
- Substantial differences in victim and witness accounts of suspect information.
- In incidents where multiple suspects are identified by name or arrested, determination of who discharged a weapon or otherwise materially participated in the incident (e.g., aided in an attempt to rob a victim) may not be resolved for some time.
- In many incidents, general information about suspects (such as their general descriptions, number, age range) is clear, but their identities remain unknown even after extensive investigation.
- Victim criminal behavior during the incident that may preclude full disclosure of facts.

Each of these factors requires a different response when recording information in the complaint record and these factors can lead to an over- or undercount of suspects involved in the incident. SAC staff reviewed individual complaint records to make appropriate adjustments to the suspects count. However, it is likely that the number of suspects reported in this study undercounts the actual number of offenders who participated in the incidents.

Table 2: Incidents with Identified Suspects and Arrests*

	Total Incidents			Non-Fatal			Fatal		
	Count	With Identified Suspect	With Arrest	Count	With Identified Suspect	With Arrest	Count	With Identified Suspect	With Arrest
Delaware									
N	281	94	77	220	60	51	61	34	26
%	--	33.5	27.4	--	27.3	23.2	--	55.7	42.6
New Castle									
N	210	55	45	168	32	27	42	23	18
%	--	26.2	21.4	--	19.0	16.1	--	54.8	42.9
Wilmington									
N	151	35	28	125	23	19	26	12	9
%	--	23.2	18.5	--	18.4	15.2	--	46.2	34.6
Sub. NCC									
N	59	20	17	43	9	8	16	11	9
%	--	33.9	28.8	--	20.9	18.6	--	68.8	56.3
Kent									
N	42	23	17	29	15	11	13	8	6
%	--	54.8	40.5	--	51.7	37.9	--	61.5	46.2
Sussex									
N	29	16	15	23	13	13	6	3	2
%	--	55.2	51.7	--	56.5	56.5	--	50.0	33.3
Refined Arrest Rates (Arrests as Percent of Incidents with Identified Suspect(s))									
Delaware			81.9			85.0			76.5
New Castle			81.8			84.4			78.3
Wilmington			80.0			82.6			75.0
Sub. NCC			85.0			88.9			81.8
Kent			73.9			73.3			75.0
Sussex			93.8			100.0			66.7

*With-Arrest counts include two incidents where suspects committed suicide at the scene, four where suspects died at the scene as a result of an exchange of gunfire, and four where suspects were killed in later shootings. One in each of the latter two categories were the result of an exchange of gunfire with police.

Overall Arrest Rates: Just over one-fourth of incidents statewide had an arrest by the June 2021 date or were considered closed through an exceptional clearance (Table 2). The percentage for non-fatal incidents was slightly lower than the overall percentage, but was substantially higher for fatal incidents. Ten incidents (including seven fatal incidents) were classified as exceptional clearances due to the death of a suspect.

In New Castle County, almost 20% of incidents overall in Wilmington and nearly 30% in the suburban portion of the county had an arrest. Kent and Sussex counties had arrest rates exceeding 40% and 50%, respectively. With the exception of Sussex County, rates for non-fatal and fatal incidents generally mirrored the patterns in the statewide data.

Refined Arrest Rates: Overall incident arrest rates, however, do not tell a complete story. As discussed in other sections of this report, numerous factors affect the ability of law enforcement agencies to identify suspects and gather sufficient evidence for an arrest. When examining arrest rates for incidents where at least one suspect has been identified, a different picture emerges.

Statewide, the *arrest rate for all incidents where a suspect had been identified* was over 80% (Table 2). This percentage was slightly higher for non-fatal incidents and slightly lower for fatal incidents. In New Castle County, refined arrest rates for all incidents in Wilmington and suburban New Castle County were at least 80%, with somewhat higher rates for non-fatal incidents and lower for fatal incidents. In Kent, the three rates were all close to 75%, while the overall rate for Sussex exceeded 90%, with higher and lower rates for non-fatal and fatal incidents, respectively.

When interpreting the refined arrest rates for fatal incidents, keep in mind the low numbers with identified suspects.

Individual Suspects and Arrests: Table 3 presents the count of total, identified, and arrested suspects by incident type and geographic region. Of the 444 *total suspects*, 135 (30%) had been identified by mid-June 2021, with 101 arrests. The percent of *suspects identified* ranged from 21% in Wilmington to 53% in Sussex County. Suspect identification rates for non-fatal incidents were generally lower than overall rates (24% overall, and from 17% in Wilmington and Suburban New Castle County to 53% in Sussex County). Rates for fatal incidents ranged from 44% in Wilmington to 68% in Kent County (55% statewide). Suspect information by law enforcement agency is located in Tables A-1 and A-2 in the Data Appendix.

The overall *rates of arrest for identified suspects* was 75% statewide, ranging from 70% to 80% across the different geographic areas. Rates for non-fatal incidents were slightly higher (80% statewide), while fatal incident rates were generally lower (67% statewide), with more variability between geographic regions.

Table 3: Suspect and Arrest Counts by Incident Type

	Overall		Non-Fatal		Fatal		Arrested*		
	Total	Identified	Total	Identified	Total	Identified	Overall	Non-Fatal	Fatal
Delaware	444	135	349	83	95	52	101	66	35
New Castle	341	81	273	46	68	35	61	37	24
<i>Wilmington</i>	242	51	203	34	39	17	37	27	10
<i>Sub. NCC</i>	99	30	70	12	29	18	24	10	14
Kent	65	34	46	21	19	13	24	15	9
Sussex	38	20	30	16	8	4	16	14	2
<i>Arrest Rates for Identified Suspects</i>									
Delaware							74.8	79.5	67.3
New Castle							75.3	80.4	68.6
<i>Wilmington</i>							72.5	79.4	58.8
<i>Sub. NCC</i>							80.0	83.3	77.8
Kent							70.6	71.4	69.2
Sussex							80.0	87.5	50.0

*Arrest counts include 10 deceased suspects, two who died by suicide (both at the scene of a fatal shooting); four killed during the incident, including one during an exchange of gunfire with police; and an additional four suspects killed in later shootings, including one during an exchange of gunfire with police. All would otherwise have been arrested for their respective shootings, with each incident classified as an exceptional clearance.

Demographic Profile of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Race, sex, and age information for the unique 2020 shooting suspects who had been identified by name, and unique individuals who appear likely to have been involved in a shooting incident in a direct or accessory role but for whom the threshold for being classified as an identified suspect was not reached is shown in Table 4. The decision to include this latter group was made to provide a richer sense of the social milieu surrounding shooting incidents. As of June 2021, 158 such individuals had been identified by name. This expanded group of unique identified suspects was mostly male (93%) and 84% were 30 years old or younger with an average age of 24.2 years. Black males comprised 85% of this expanded suspect group. Five suspects (3%) in this table were also of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of 2020 Identified Shooting Suspects (Expanded Group)*

Age Range	Race and Sex				Ethnicity and Sex**		Total***
	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	
Under 14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14 to 17	34	0	2	1	0	1	37
Juvenile Total	34	0	2	1	--	1	37
18 to 21	47	1	4	0	0	0	52
22 to 25	20	2	0	0	1	0	22
26 to 30	17	2	2	0	0	0	21
18 to 30 Total	84	5	6	0	1	--	95
31 to 35	6	3	0	0	1	0	9
36 to 40	7	1	0	1	1	0	9
41 to 45	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
46 to 50	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
Over 50	0	3	0	0	1	0	3
Average Age	23.2	35.8	21.3	33.0	40.0	NA	24.2
Overall Total	135	12	8	3	4	1	158

*All suspects in the table have been identified by name.

**Race and Ethnicity are considered separate concepts for demographic purposes. In the 'Race and Sex' columns of this table, each category includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic suspects. In the 'Ethnicity and Sex' columns, all races are included. Therefore, if a person is Hispanic, he/she would be counted twice in this table – once each in the respective columns for race and ethnicity.

***The figures in this column are based on the race and sex columns since suspects would otherwise be counted twice if they were Hispanic.

While two-thirds of shooting incidents remain without an identified primary suspect, the larger patterns observed in the incident, victim, and suspect characteristics data since 2011 suggest that unidentified suspects in the remaining 2020 incidents would likely be very similar in demographic characteristics to those included in Table 4.

Demographic information for the 2020 shooting victims is shown in Table 5. Most victims (86%) were male. Overall, 52% of victims were between 18 and 35 years old with an average age of 27.4 years. Black males accounted for 77% of all shooting victims in 2020. Less than 3% of all victims were also of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity.

Table 5: Demographic Profile of 2020 Shooting Victims*

Age Range	Race and Sex				Ethnicity and Sex**		Total***
	Black Male	White Male	Black Female	White Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	
Under 14	6	1	4	0	0	0	11
14 to 17	36	2	5	1	1	0	44
Juvenile Total	42	3	9	1	1	--	55
18 to 21	70	4	8	3	2	0	85
22 to 25	43	2	5	3	0	2	53
26 to 30	44	5	4	1	1	0	54
18 to 30 Total	157	11	17	7	3	2	192
31 to 35	24	4	2	1	2	0	31
36 to 40	23	5	3	2	0	1	33
41 to 45	11	2	1	1	0	0	15
46 to 50	9	3	2	2	0	0	16
Over 50	4	3	1	1	0	0	9
Average Age	26.4	34.5	25.5	34.1	26.6	26.4	27.4
Overall Total	270	31	35	15	6	3	351

*Three victims were excluded—two for whom complete demographic information could not be determined, and one from a different race category.

**Race and Ethnicity are considered separate concepts for demographic purposes. In the 'Race and Sex' columns of this table, each category includes both Hispanic and non-Hispanic victims. In the 'Ethnicity and Sex' columns, all races are included. Therefore, if a person is Hispanic, he/she would be counted twice in this table – once each in the respective columns for race and ethnicity.

***The figures in this column are based on the race and sex columns since victims would otherwise be counted twice if they were Hispanic.

Demographic Profile of Shooting Incidents

Since a number of shooting incidents involved multiple suspects and/or multiple victims, comparing the total set of victims with the total set of suspects to understand the demographics of 2020 shooting incidents can be misleading. Instead, race and age data for the victims and suspects (using the 135 suspects identified by name in Table 3) involved in each incident were examined and then consolidated so that each incident could be assigned single categories for victim age, victim race, suspect age, and suspect race. Each victim-suspect category pair could then be compared and the incident categorized on the extent to which suspects and victims were similar to or different from each other based on each pairing.

Table 6 explores the relationship between suspect and victim race based on the categories assigned for each incident. Of the 94 incidents in 2020 where race information was available for both named suspects and victims, eight involved multiple suspects or victims equally split between racial categories, and therefore excluded from further analysis. For the remaining 86 incidents, 84% involved suspects and victims who were all or mostly of the same race. This percentage was similar for incidents that involved Black victims but lower for incidents involving White victims (44% of 18 incidents).

Table 6: Correlation Between Victim and Suspect Race by Incident Level

	Victim Race Category Assigned to Incident						Overall Number
	Number	Black % of Row Total	% of Column Total	Number	White % of Row Total	% of Column Total	
ALL Suspects and ALL Victims of Same Race	62	88.6%	91.2%	8	11.4%	44.4%	70
MAJORITY of Victims and of Suspects BOTH of Same Race	2	100%	2.9%	0	NA	NA	2
Victims Shot by Suspects of DIFFERENT Race	4	28.6%	5.9%	10	71.4%	55.6%	14
Total	68			18			86

Table 7 explores the relationship between suspect and victim age based on the categories assigned for each incident. In 93 incidents, age information was available for both suspects and victims. One of five broad age categories was then assigned to victims in an incident if at least a majority belonged to the same age group. This same process was repeated for the named suspects in each incident. For 21 incidents there was no majority age group. In 72 incidents, each victim and suspect group could be assigned an age category and were then compared. In the incidents where victim and suspect age categories could be compared, overall, 51% of shooting incidents involved suspects and victims who were within the same age range (indicated by the shaded boxes in the table). Except for the under 18 and age 18 to 30 category, the remaining groups saw only a minority of, or no victims shot by suspects in the same age range, with proportions ranging from 0% to 31%. Overall, 43 of the 72 incidents examined (60%) involved suspects in the 18 to 30 age group.

Table 7: Victim-Suspect Age Correlation by Incident Level

		Victim Age Category Assigned to Incident					Suspect Category Totals
		Under 18	18-30	31-40	41-50	Over 50	
Suspect Age Category Assigned to Incident	Under 18	5	5	0	1	0	11
	18-30	3	27	6	4	3	43
	31-40	0	4	5	2	0	11
	41-50	0	0	4	0	0	4
	Over 50	0	0	1	2	0	3
Victim Category Totals		8	36	16	9	3	72

Criminal Histories of Shooting Suspects and Victims

Table 8 summarizes the Delaware criminal arrest histories for unique victims, unique shooting suspects, and unique individuals who appear likely to have been involved in a shooting incident in a direct or accessory role but for whom the threshold for being classified as an identified suspect was not reached. The decision to include this latter group was made to provide a richer sense of the social milieu surrounding shooting incidents. Most of the 158 suspects in this expanded group (94%) and of the 346 shooting victims (86%) had an arrest history in Delaware. Of those with such arrest histories, 129 suspects (87%) and 238 victims (80%) had at least one felony arrest. Of those with a felony history, 66% of victims and 73% of suspects had three or more arrests on felony charges. Note that the number of unique shooting suspects represents less than half of the total minimum suspect count. Therefore, caution is urged when drawing conclusions about differences between suspect and victim arrest histories. The inclusion of additional known suspects could lead to smaller or larger differences in these patterns.

Table 8: Delaware Criminal Histories for Shooting Victims and Expanded Suspect Group
(Unique Individuals)

	Unique Suspects		Unique Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Known Suspects and Victims	158		346	
Have Arrest History in Delaware*	149	94.3	297	85.8
≥1 Arrest was for a Felony	129	86.6	238	80.1
Felony Drug Arrests	57	38.3	127	42.8
1 or 2	45	78.9	82	64.6
3 or more	12	21.1	45	35.4
Felony Weapons Arrests	80	53.7	147	49.5
1 or 2	54	67.5	105	71.4
3 or more	26	32.5	42	28.6
Other Felony Arrests	117	78.5	204	68.7
1 or 2	55	47.0	91	44.6
3 or more	62	53.0	113	55.4
Violent Felony Arrests**	115	77.2	217	73.1
1 or 2	49	42.6	98	45.2
3 or more	66	57.4	119	54.8

*Felony percentages are of those with an arrest history.

**Violent felonies included in this table are those defined in Title 11, § 4201(c) of the Delaware Code.

Around 40% of both victims and suspects with an arrest history had at least one arrest for a felony drug offense. Most suspects and victims had at least one arrest for a violent felony (as defined in Title 11, § 4201(c) of the Delaware Code, which includes certain drug and weapons felonies) or a non-violent, non-drug-related felony (termed ‘other felony’). Around half of both suspects and victims had at least one arrest for a felony weapons offense.

Table 9 compares the age at first contact with the Delaware criminal justice system for the shooting suspects and victims from Table 8 who had criminal histories prior to the shooting incident. The table shows that 81% of both the 149 suspects and the 297 shooting victims in 2020 with histories were younger than age 18 at the time of their first arrest in Delaware.

Table 9: Age of Suspects in Expanded Group and Victims with Delaware Arrest Histories at First Contact with Delaware’s Criminal Justice System

Age Range	Unique Suspects		Unique Victims	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 14	53	35.6	104	35.0
14 to 17	68	45.6	137	46.1
Juvenile Total	121	81.2	241	81.1
18 to 21	20	13.4	32	10.8
22 to 25	3	2.0	10	3.4
26 to 30	3	2.0	4	1.3
31 to 35	0	0	5	1.7
36 to 40	0	0	1	0.3
41 to 45	2	1.3	1	0.3
46 to 50	0	0	1	0.3
Over 50	0	0	2	0.7
Total with Delaware History	149		297	

Day and Time Analysis of 2020 Shootings in Delaware

Table 10 and the two figures that follow show the distribution of 2020 shooting incidents by the day of the week and the month in which they occurred. Incidents most frequently occurred on a Saturday (61 incidents) and least often on Monday (24 incidents). Essentially, 2020 was a tale of two different years within one—from January through May, no month had 20 incidents or more, while for the remaining seven months, each had more than 20 incidents.

2020 also set two records: three months (July, September, and December) eclipsed the previous monthly record of 32 incidents; and three monthly totals were 30 or more, exceeding the previous high of two.

More shooting incidents occurred in July and September (38 and 36 incidents, respectively), with the fewest occurring in March (8). For illustrative purposes, figures for Delaware and Wilmington showing the monthly progression of shootings for 2011 through 2020 are also included (see Figures 5 and 6).

Table 10: 2020 Shooting Incidents by Month and Day of Week

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Month Total
January	5	1	1	3	2	1	3	16
February	2	1	6	2	1	0	6	18
March	0	1	3	2	1	1	0	8
April	1	2	6	0	0	3	4	16
May	5	0	2	2	1	2	5	17
June	4	2	7	0	6	5	4	28
July	4	5	6	7	6	3	7	38
August	3	4	2	2	5	5	4	25
September	6	2	6	10	3	0	9	36
October	7	1	3	3	1	4	6	25
November	4	1	0	3	4	5	4	21
December	3	4	0	4	10	3	9	33
Day Total	44	24	42	38	40	32	61	281

Figure 3: Shooting Incidents by Day of the Week—Wilmington and Rest of Delaware

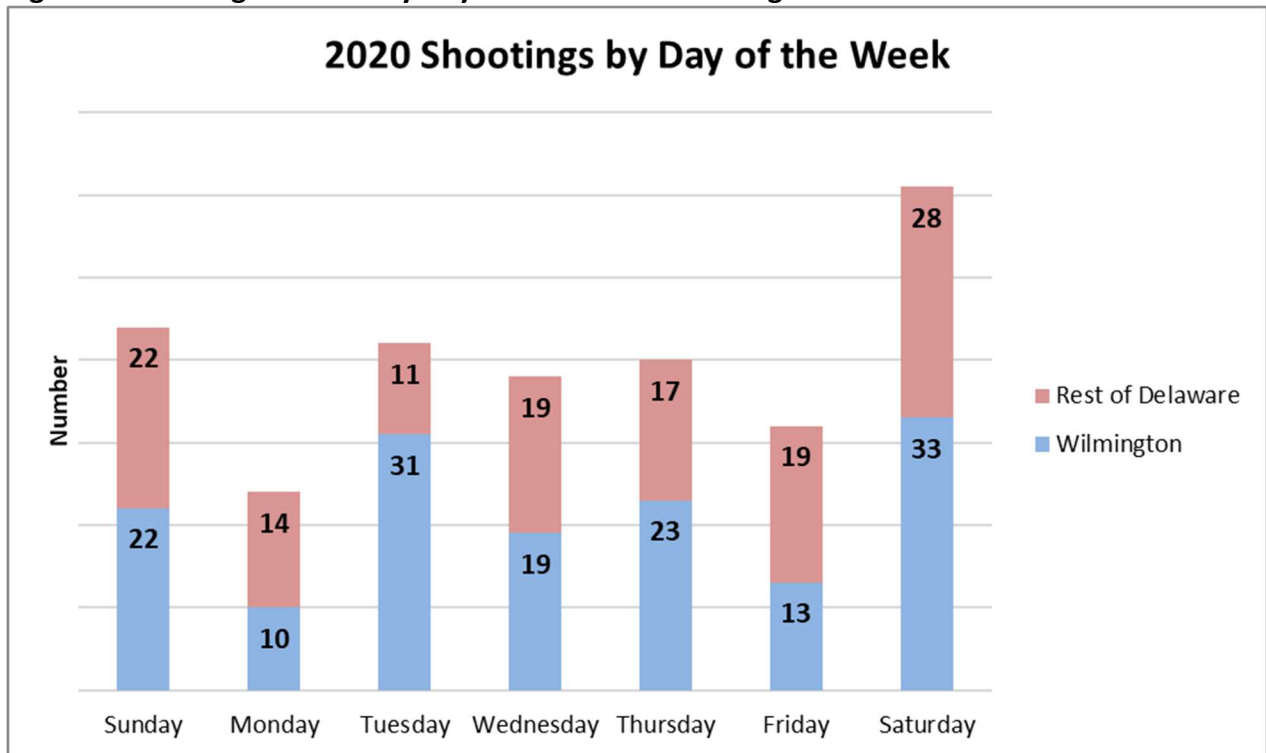


Figure 4: Shooting Incidents by Month—Wilmington and Rest of Delaware

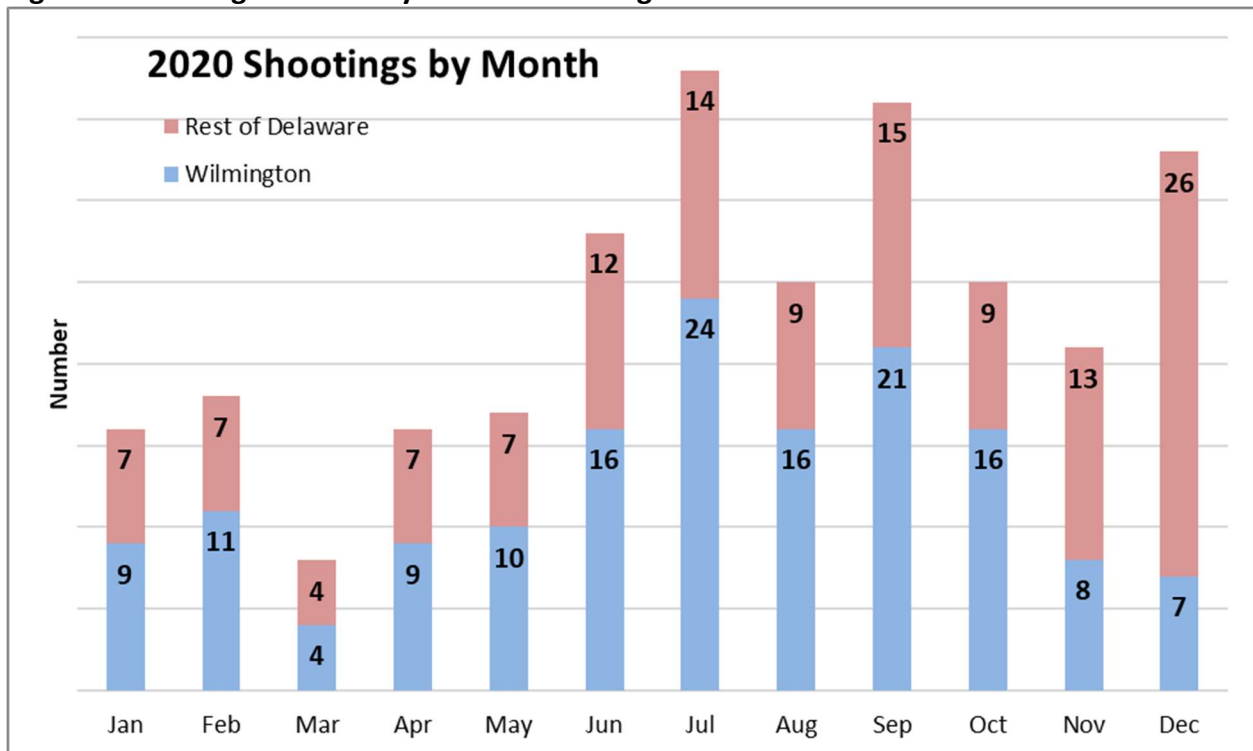


Figure 5: Monthly Progression of Delaware Shooting Incidents, 2011-2020

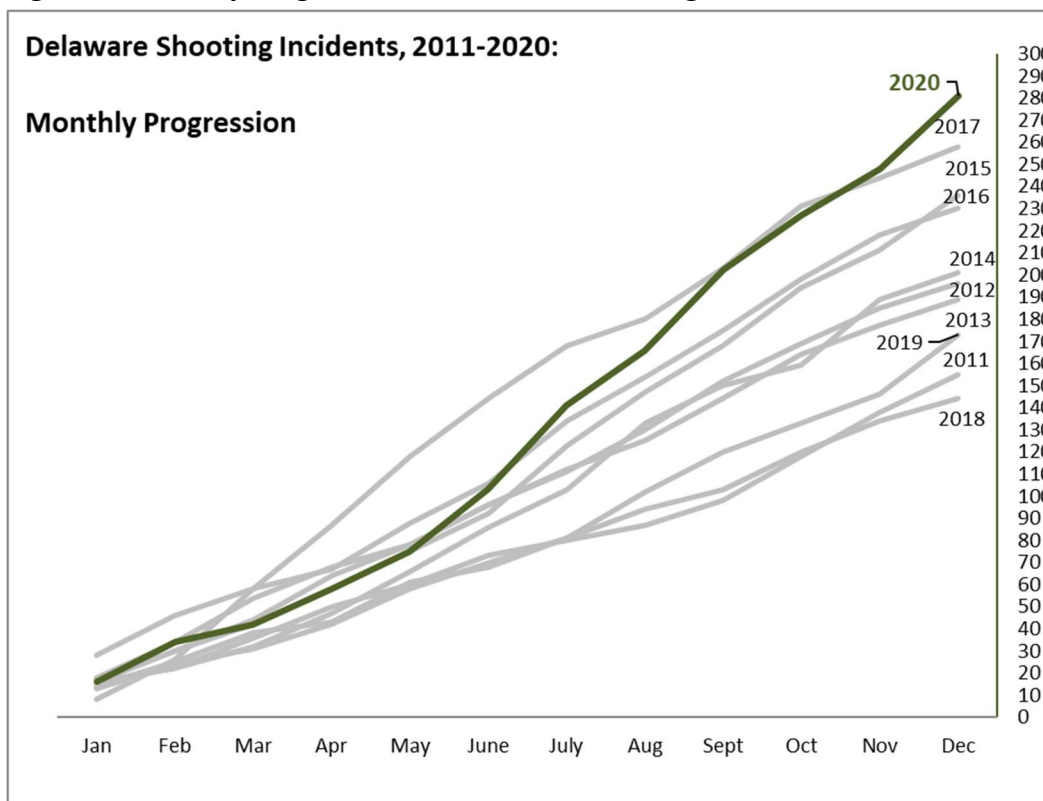


Figure 6: Monthly Progression of Wilmington Shooting Incidents, 2011-2020

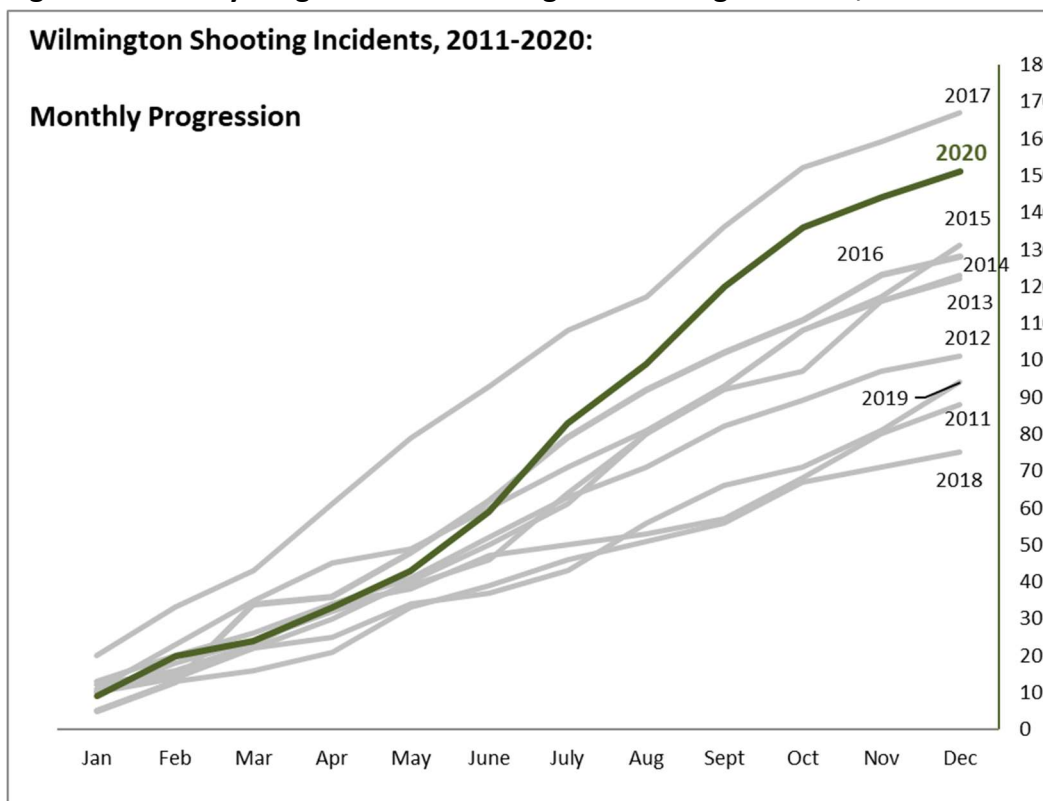
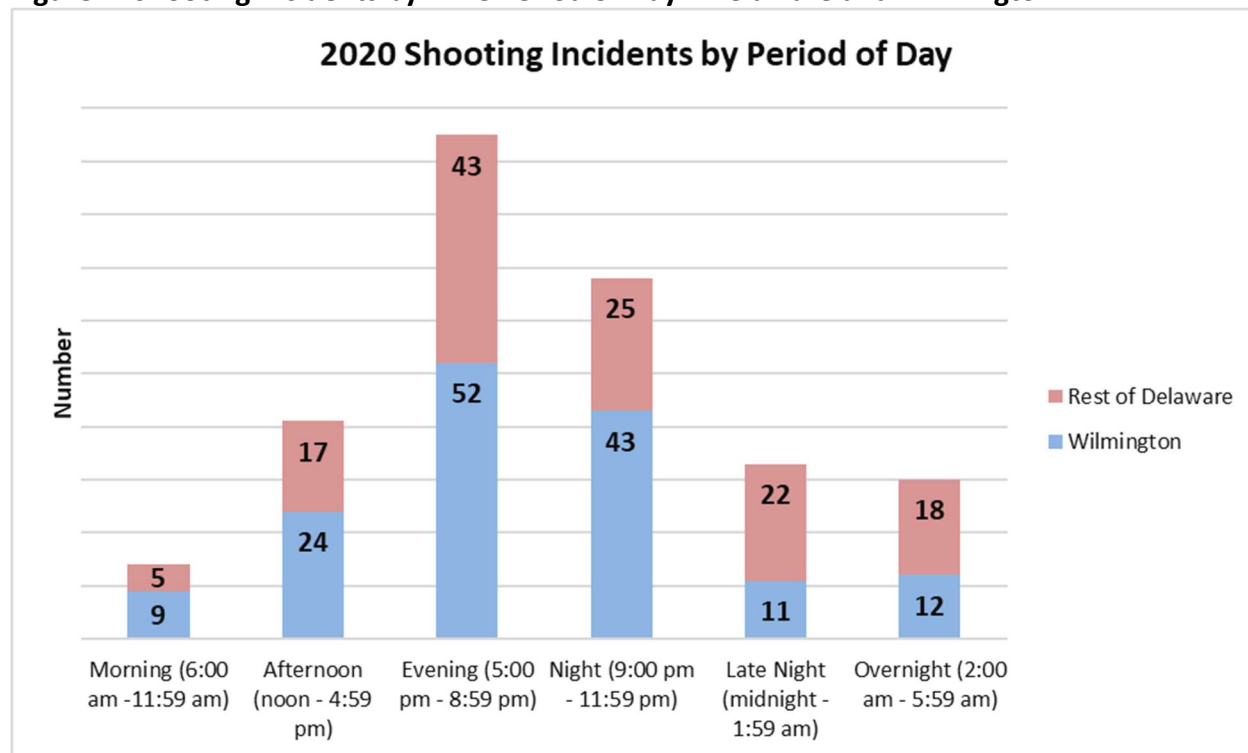


Figure 7 shows the distribution of 2020 shooting incidents by the time-period of the day in which they occurred. More than half (58%) of all incidents statewide occurred between 5:00 pm and midnight, with 14 incidents (5%) occurring between 6:00 am and noon and 15% during the afternoon hours. Wilmington accounted for 37% of incidents that occurred between midnight and 6:00 am, and 58% of incidents which occurred between 6:00 am and midnight. There was a distinct peak period from 5:00 pm to 8:59 pm for both the state as a whole and Wilmington, with 34% of incidents occurring during that time frame for each area.

Figure 7: Shooting Incidents by Time Period of Day—Delaware and Wilmington*



*Time categories were created based on expected variations in criminal behavior. As a result, there is variation in the size of the time span covered by each category.

Victim Injuries, Suspect Motives, and Victim-Offender Relationships

Table 11 displays the areas of the body where shooting victims were hit by gunfire. More than 60% of the 352 victims with available injury information had a single gunshot wound: 40% to the lower body (legs, feet, buttocks), 34% to the upper body (chest, back, abdomen), with the remaining victims struck in either the arm or hand, or the head, face, or neck.

More than one-third of victims, however, were struck multiple times: 13% of all victims received injuries to same area of the body (e.g., struck once in each leg; multiple times in the chest), while 25% had injuries to more than one body area (e.g., head and chest; leg and abdomen).

Table 11: Shooting Victims by Area of Body Struck

Area of Victim's Body	Number	Percent
Single Injury to Single Area	218	61.6
<i>Legs/Feet/Buttocks</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>39.9</i>
<i>Chest/Back/Abdomen</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>33.5</i>
<i>Head/Face/Neck</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>14.7</i>
<i>Arm/Hand</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>11.9</i>
Multiple Injuries to Single Area	46	13.0
Injuries to Multiple Areas	88	24.9
Injuries not Specified	2	0.6
Total Victims	354	

The ultimate motives for committing a crime may not become apparent until well into a criminal investigation or sometimes not even until a case is being adjudicated. Table 12 displays information about apparent motives and/or relevant circumstances for 152 shooting incidents where specific information about any/all motives or circumstances surrounding an incident was available (54% of the incident total). The most common motive or circumstance was an Altercation (36%), followed by a Drug-Related issue (35%), Retaliation (18%), and Robbery (16%). Intimate partner violence was a factor in 12% of incidents, while a bystander or otherwise unintended person was struck in 9% of incidents.

Table 12: Motives/Circumstances Related to Shooting Incidents—Incident Level

Motives/Circumstances	Incidents*	Percent of Incidents
Altercation/Dispute/Argument	55	36.2
Drug-related	53	34.9
Retaliation	27	17.8
Robbery	25	16.4
Intimate Partner Violence**	18	11.8
Bystander	13	8.6
Other	36	23.7
Unknown, but with secondary circumstances	64	42.1
Total Where Motive/Circumstances Known	152	

*Many incidents have more than one motive/circumstance; therefore, counts and percentages reflect the inclusion of multiple motives/circumstances within an incident.

**Due to the complexity and/or unique nature of some incidents in this category, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between this count and the Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend (current/former) category in Table 13.

Note: Additional information about Delaware domestic violence homicides is available in the Delaware Domestic Violence Coordinating Council's *Fatal Incident Review Team Reports* (<https://dvcc.delaware.gov/reports/>).

For the 80 incidents where at least one suspect had been identified by name (or where there was good evidence that the victim knew the suspect) and victim-offender relationship information was available (29% of incident total), the relationships between all suspects and all victims involved in an incident were examined. The victim-offender relationship for the incident was then classified based on the closest relationship between any suspect and any victim. For example, if the incident involved three suspects and one victim and the three offender-victim relationships were ‘friend,’ ‘stranger,’ and someone known in the community, ‘friend’ would be the relationship level assigned to the incident. This approach provides an additional way of examining the circumstances that may have brought a shooting suspect and victim into the proximity required for the shooting to occur.

The relationships between shooting suspects and their victims at the incident level are shown in Table 13. The most frequent victim-to-offender relationship was Otherwise Known (38%), followed by Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend (current/former) (24%). Acquaintance comprised 18% of relationships. Note that in one of the incidents identified as being related to intimate partner violence, the nature of the circumstances warranted a victim-suspect relationship determination other than Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend (current/former).

Table 13: Victim to Suspect Relationship—Incident Level

Type of Relationship	Number	Percent
Otherwise Known	30	37.5
Spouse/Boyfriend/Girlfriend (current/former)*	19	23.8
Acquaintance	14	17.5
Stranger	8	10.0
Friend	7	8.8
Family (e.g., sibling, parent, child, in-law)	1	1.3
Neighbor	1	1.3
Total Where Relationship Is Known	80	

*Due to the complexity and/or unique nature of some incidents in this category, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between this count and the Intimate Partner Violence category in Table 12.

Important Issues and Considerations

Victim and Witness Cooperation

The data in this report indicate that, where specific suspects are identified by name, most are subsequently arrested (82% statewide). However, the cooperation of shooting victims and of witnesses to shooting incident investigations is often critical in securing the accurate identification of suspects, and the subsequent generation of arrests and successful criminal prosecutions.

In this shooting report, both victim and witness cooperation were explored for all incidents, with cooperation classified at the level of the incident. Based on a review of information available in the complaint reports, cooperation for each group was classified at one of three levels: full cooperation, limited cooperation, or no cooperation. Where possible, statements of police officers were used as the primary criteria in determining cooperation.

This review indicates that in 74% of 214 classifiable incidents overall (84% where witnesses were known), at least one witness could be classified as being fully cooperative with the investigation (Table 14). In 39% of 237 classifiable incidents overall (50% where a victim was able to cooperate), victims were similarly cooperative (Table 15).

Table 14: Level of Witness Cooperation (Incident Level)

	Number*	Percent
Full Cooperation	158	73.8
Limited Cooperation	23	10.7
Witnesses Refused to Cooperate	8	3.7
No Known Witnesses	25	11.7
Total	214	

*Could not classify 67 incidents

Table 15: Level of Victim Cooperation (Incident Level)

	Number*	Percent
Full Cooperation	93	39.2
Limited Cooperation	69	29.1
No Cooperation	26	11.0
Victim Deceased/Unable to Cooperate	49	20.7
Grand Total	237	

*Could not classify 44 incidents

Reflections on Ten Years of State-Wide Shooting Reports

In the ten years of reports in this series, certain themes have repeatedly occurred. In addition, some insights have emerged that are worthy of comment.

The proportion of both shooting victims and identified suspects with Delaware criminal histories is high; a large proportion of those with such a history have at least one Delaware felony arrest. A consistent finding each reporting year is the extent of prior criminal history (particular a felony history) among both victims and known suspects. While an as-yet unquantified portion of that finding is the extent to which a suspect in one incident becomes a victim in a later incident (and vice versa) due to ongoing disputes, it may suggest more about the larger contexts that bring suspects and victims in proximity to each other prior a shooting incident.

Of those with Delaware criminal histories, most have their first involvement with the state's criminal justice system as juveniles; a significant portion below the age of 14. From a prevention and early intervention perspective, this is a critical recurring theme. Implied in this finding is the need to understand the full extent of the developmental pathways that juveniles take to shooting involvement specifically, and for that understanding to inform existing and future intervention and prevention efforts as appropriate.

Specific geographic areas have historically been affected by shooting incidents, but shootings are not primarily a City of Wilmington problem. Wilmington often dominates media stories and public discussions related to shooting incidents. However, on average, the city accounts for 57% of such incidents. Even within the city, incidents are not randomly distributed—they tend to affect a subset of communities/neighborhoods from year to year. But other parts of the state have a history of incidents—in New Castle County: portions of the Route 13 corridor north of Wilmington, and the Route 40 and 13 corridors south and west of Wilmington; in Kent County: certain communities within the City of Dover, and some neighborhoods just south of the city. Other parts of the state—e.g., parts of the Middletown area and Smyrna, parts of the Seaford and Milford areas—have seen more activity in recent years. For details, please see the map series referenced earlier in the report.

Viewing shooting incidents as a cross-jurisdictional phenomenon may be warranted. Delaware is a small state sharing borders with three more populous states, and located in close proximity to two major metropolitan areas. In the course of our shooting research, we have noted the flow of some suspects and victims between jurisdictions and counties within Delaware, and also between the surrounding states. However, data issues (e.g., transient living situations for some individuals, unknown accuracy of self-reported address data) make it difficult to quantify the extent of the issue.

Looking forward, the future presents an opportunity to further work to understand the problem of shootings in Delaware and approaches to addressing it:

The end of the functional moratorium on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-funded gun violence research creates the chance for Delaware universities and colleges to conduct studies on gun violence that are outside the scope of the Center's work or beyond its current resource capacity. The data

captured in the Center's shooting report series present a limited look at the issue of criminal shooting incidents in Delaware. More research is needed to understand myriad other aspects of the problem and its consequences, including the impacts of victimization on victims, their families, the communities in which they live, and society; developmental pathways into offending; and the evaluation of existing efforts in the state to reduce and/or prevent gun violence.

Conclusion

In 2020, there were 281 criminal, non-accidental shooting incidents in Delaware that resulted in the injury or death of another person. The year-end total set report-series record highs for Delaware as a whole and for Sussex County, and tied the series high for suburban New Castle County. More than half of all incidents (54%) occurred in the City of Wilmington, with another 21% occurring in suburban New Castle County, 15% in Kent County, and 10% in Sussex County.

Two-hundred-eighty-seven individuals had non-fatal injuries as a result of these incidents, and 67 died of their wounds in 61 homicide incidents (with the number of fatal incidents also setting a series high). Six victims died during six fatal incidents related to an intimate relationship. More than 440 individuals were suspected of involvement in the shooting incidents, with 135 suspects identified by name. As of June 17, 2021, arrests or exceptional clearances had been made in 27% of all shooting incidents and 43% of homicide incidents, but 85% and 77%, respectively where at least one suspect had been identified.

Most shooting victims (86%) were male, with Blacks comprising the largest racial group of victims (87% of all victims, 90% of male victims). For the 86 incidents where demographic information was available for both victims and suspects, 84% involved victims and suspects who were predominantly of the same race.

More than 86% of victims and more than 90% of identified suspects had criminal histories in Delaware. Of those with a Delaware arrest history, 80% of victims and 87% of identified suspects had at least one felony arrest. Most victims and identified suspects were juveniles at the time of their first Delaware arrest (81% for each group).

It is worth noting that the findings for gender, race, arrest history, and age at first Delaware arrest have been highly consistent across all ten statewide shooting reports the Center has produced, reflecting an important set of dynamics relevant to decreasing the occurrence of shooting incidents.

An examination of the cooperation of witnesses and victims in shooting investigations indicates that, in 74% of incidents overall (84% where witnesses were known), at least one witness could be described as being fully cooperative. Victims had a similar level of cooperation in 39% of incidents overall (50% where a victim was able to cooperate).

Technical Appendix

History of the Statewide Shooting Report

The first three reports covered 2011, 2012, and 2013 and focused on multiple characteristics of shooting incidents, victims injured as a result, and suspects involved. The 2013 report also included an analysis of the legal status and outcomes of incidents from 2011 and 2012. The 2014 and 2015 reports built on those prior reports and included an examination of victim and witness cooperation with subsequent shooting investigations. To reflect an apparent increase in gang-related activity, a brief section on apparent gang involvement was added to the 2016 report, while the legal status and outcomes section was temporarily eliminated due to the complex impact of gang-related arrest and prosecution activity during 2016 and 2017 on relevant data.

The 2017 report continued the approach taken for 2016, except that the gang-involvement section was eliminated due to insufficient data. The 2018 edition continued the 2017 approach as gang-involvement data remained insufficient. The 2019 report introduced a major revision to how incident, victim, and suspect data are presented, resulting in some additional detail in these areas, along with some overall stylistic changes to enhance readability.

Detailed Methodology

To inform the process of identifying, locating, and (eventually) confirming incidents within CJIS, active monitoring of media and law enforcement agency websites was conducted throughout the year to flag potential shooting incidents as they were publicly announced.

The data presented in this report were obtained from Delaware's Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). First, complaint records filed by law enforcement agencies were downloaded from CJIS for 2020. After the initial download, these records were subjected to multiple stages of filtering to identify incidents where a criminal, non-accidental discharge of a firearm resulted in the death or injury of one or more victims (whether the person struck was an intended target or a bystander). First, all incidents identified through the active monitoring process above were located within the downloaded record set and flagged for further review. Second, the remaining records were queried based on data fields that have served as useful indicators of potential shooting incidents. The resulting subset of records was then subjected to cursory manual review to flag individual incidents that warranted further review. Detailed records for the combined data set (i.e., the records resulting from the first two stages just described), were then reviewed individually to verify that every incident included at least one victim who was injured or killed by a firearm through criminal, non-accidental actions. Once all incidents had

been identified, information about suspect and victim demographics and arrest histories was downloaded from CJIS and matched with incident information. Analyses were then conducted to examine characteristics of shooting incidents, victims, and suspects.

Expanded Considerations and Limitations

Criminal investigation of shooting incidents, as is typical for many violent crimes, can be complex. In some situations, an investigation may be quickly and definitively closed through the clear identification and speedy arrest of a suspect. In many incidents however, much time and effort is required to interview witnesses and victims, sort through and follow up on investigative leads, interview persons of interest and possible suspects, and finally build a criminal case that leads to the issuance of a warrant and eventually to an arrest. Much information can be generated during the course of the investigation and old information can change, particularly as the investigation moves through its early stages. In other cases, an investigation may reveal little information—there may be no witnesses to the incident, the victim may not be able to provide information helpful to the investigation, or, in some situations, the victim may refuse to cooperate with the investigation.

In investigations that generate much information, law enforcement agencies must update complaint records often, introducing numerous opportunities for errors and missing data and creating a large amount of data for crime analysis review. In incidents where an investigation generates little information, only limited data is available for analysis.

Occasional data issues in the complaint records submitted and maintained by law enforcement agencies (e.g., incorrectly labeled records, missing or inaccurate information in victim, suspect, and brief text fields, records updated after the SAC's filtering process begins, etc.) require the use of triangulated data sources to increase the confidence that the final data set is as complete as possible. These data issues require extensive checking and rechecking of the data to arrive at the final counts presented in this report. Despite these quality control measures, it remains a possibility that shooting incidents are undercounted in this report, although likely to only a very minor degree.

Victim and witness cooperation can also impact the Center's ability to accurately count shooting incidents. Occasionally, a shooting investigation will locate a scene complete with blood and spent casings; however, no victim can be located, despite a canvas of hospitals in Delaware and the surrounding states. In some of these cases, the potential victim's injuries may have been minor enough that they chose not to seek treatment at a medical facility. Based on reports of victim behavior, it is also possible that a victim presented for medical treatment but was effective in deceiving medical personnel regarding the nature and cause of the injury,

knowing that hospitals would have to report a suspected shooting incident to police. (Note: if evidence at the scene is consistent with a shooting incident resulting in an injury, but no victim is ever located, it is not classified as a qualifying incident.)

Additionally, in some incidents where injuries have been minor or where the nature of the wound raised questions about whether the injury was the result of a qualifying incident, a lack of cooperation made it challenging for the Center to classify the incident. In such cases the Center followed the best available information: determinations by medical personnel, police statements, or absent both of these, the preponderance of information. As a result of these issues and this process, the determinations for some incidents may not reflect the unknown truth. However, incidents included and excluded through the determination process generally balance each other out (i.e., there is minimal net effect on the final counts).

Data Appendix

Table A-1: Incidents, Victims, and Suspects by County and Agency

Shootings in 2020 by Reporting Agency						
County	Agency	Incidents	Victims	Suspects		
				All Suspects	Identified by Name	Incidents with an Arrest (Individual Arrests)*
New Castle	Wilmington Police Dept.	151	186	242	51	28 (37)
	Suburban New Castle County	59	82	99	30	17 (24)
	New Castle County PD	32	44	54	19	12 (16)
	Delaware State Police Trp. 2	11	16	22	5	3 (5)
	DSP Troop 1	6	9	10	3	0
	DSP Troop 6	4	4	4	0	0
	Middletown Police Dept.	3	5	5	2	1 (2)
	Elsmere Police Dept.	1	2	1	0	0
	Newark Police Dept.	1	1	2	0	0
	Newport Police Dept.	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	New Castle County Total	210	268	341	81	45 (61)
Kent	Dover Police Dept.	29	36	49	23	10 (15)
	DSP Troop 3	10	10	12	10	6 (8)
	Smyrna Police Dept.	2	3	3	1	1 (1)
	Milford Police Dept.	1	1	1	0	0
	Kent County Total	42	50	65	34	17 (24)
Sussex	DSP Troop 7	7	11	9	5	3 (3)
	DSP Troop 4	6	6	6	4	4 (4)
	DSP Troop 5	6	6	7	4	4 (4)
	Seaford Police Dept.	5	8	11	5	2 (3)
	Laurel Police Dept.	2	2	2	1	1 (1)
	Bridgeville Police Dept.	1	1	1	0	0
	Delmar Police Dept.	1	1	1	0	0
	Milton Police Dept.	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	Sussex County Total	29	36	38	20	15 (16)
	Statewide Total	281	354	444	135	77 (101)

*Arrest counts include ten deceased suspects, two who died by suicide (both at the scene of a fatal shooting); four killed during the incident, including one during an exchange of gunfire with police; and an additional four killed in later shootings, including one during an exchange of gunfire with police. All would otherwise have been arrested for their respective shootings, with each incident classified as an exceptional clearance.

Table A-2: Fatal Shootings by County and Reporting Agency

Fatal Shootings in 2020 by Reporting Agency						
County	Agency	Incidents	Victims	Suspects		
				All Suspects	Identified By Name	Incidents with an Arrest (Individual Arrests)*
New Castle	Wilmington Police Dept.	26	29	39	17	9 (10)
	Suburban New Castle County	16	19	29	18	9 (14)
	New Castle County PD	9	10	13	7	4 (6)
	DSP Troop 1	1	1	3	3	0
	DSP Troop 2	3	5	8	5	3 (5)
	Middletown Police Dept.	2	2	4	2	1 (2)
	Newport Police Dept.	1	1	1	1	1 (1)
	New Castle County Total	42	48	68	35	18 (24)
Kent	Dover Police Dept.	8	8	12	8	3 (4)
	DSP Troop 3	4	4	6	5	3 (5)
	Milford Police Dept.	1	1	1	0	0
	Kent County Total	13	13	19	13	6 (9)
Sussex	DSP Troop 4	2	2	2	1	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 5	2	2	3	1	1 (1)
	DSP Troop 7	2	2	3	2	0
	Sussex County Total	6	6	8	4	2 (2)
Statewide Total		61	67	95	52	26 (35)

*The arrest counts include seven deceased suspects (two by suicide at the scene; three killed at the scene during the incident; and two killed during a later shooting, including one during an exchange of gun fire with police). All would otherwise have been arrested for committing the shooting, with the incidents classified as exceptional clearances.

Table A-3: Overall Shooting Incidents, 2011-2020

	All Delaware	Wilmington	Sub. New Castle County	Kent County	Sussex County
2011	155	88	37	21	9
2012	196	101	54	20	21
2013	188	121	32	23	12
2014	201	123	42	20	16
2015	236	131	47	48	10
2016	230	128	59	29	14
2017	258	167	44	33	14
2018	144	75	25	31	13
2019	173	94	31	37	11
2020	281	151	59	42	29

Figure A-1: Overall Shooting Incidents, 2011-2020

